

REMARKS

Claims 1-78 are currently pending, with claims 1, 6, 10, 14, 19, 24, 44, 47, 50-54, 69 and 77 being independent. Claims 50-78 have been added and recite features recited in claims 1-49. No new matter has been introduced.

Initially, applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephone interview granted to the undersigned on October 10, 2007, for this and related application serial number 11/211,694. The substance of that interview is reflected in the comments provided below. Due to the USPTO rules changes regarding continuation practice, the new claims discussed at the interview are being submitted in the present application.

Claims 1-13, 33 and 34 were previously allowed and, based on comments by the Examiner prior to the telephone interview that a notice of allowance was to be mailed in this application, claims 14-30, 35-37 and 41-49 (which were previously being appealed) are believed to be allowable.

As discussed at the interview, new independent claim 50 recites features similar to those of allowable claim 1. In particular, like allowed claim 1, claim 50 recites a multilayer insulating film with a contact hole that includes a first opening in a first layer and a second opening in a second layer over the first layer, where an edge of the second opening is rounded off, an opening in the second layer exposes a region surrounding an opening in the first layer, and a thickness of the first layer is less than one third of the total thickness of the multilayer insulating film. Claim 50 is broader than claim 1 in that, in claim 50, the gate electrode is not required to be over the gate insulating film, an opening in the gate insulating film that exposes a semiconductor is not required, and the second insulating layer comprises a different material from the first insulating layer rather than from the gate insulating film. As those features are not believed to be the basis for the allowance of claim 1 over Fu, Sasaki, Lin and Zhang, claim 50 is believed to be allowable over Fu, Sasaki, Lin and Zhang at least for the reasons that claim 1 is allowable.

New independent claims 51-54 are broader than claim 50 primarily in that claims 51-54 do not require the second opening to expose a portion of the first insulating film that surrounds the first opening, and do not require the first insulating layer to comprise a different material than

the gate insulating film. As neither of those features are believed to be the basis for the allowance of claim 1 over Fu, Sasaki, Lin and Zhang, claims 51-54 are believed to be allowable over Fu, Sasaki, Lin and Zhang at least for the reasons that claim 1 is allowable.

New independent claim 69 generally corresponds to claim 14. While claim 69 is broader than claim 14 because, for example, claim 69 does not require a gate insulating film through which the contact hole extends, this aspect of claim 14 is not believed to be the basis for the allowance of claim 14. Accordingly, claim 69 is believed to be allowable for the reasons that claim 14 is allowable.

New independent claim 77 is directed to a method that may be used to produce a device such as the device of claim 69. Accordingly, claim 77 is believed to be allowable for at least the same reasons.

Applicant asks that all claims be examined in view of the amendment to the claims.

The fees in the amount of \$3,730 for extra independent claims (7 = \$1470), extra claims (29 = \$1,450) and the request for continued examination fee (\$810) are being paid concurrently herewith on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 10/31/07


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